

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 10, 1967 THE WASHINGTON POST

# U.S. Bomb Eyed for Haiphong 'Destructor' Devised to Cut Cargo Routes

By George C. Wilson  
Washington Post Staff Writer

The United States has developed a new bomb which some military and civilian officials see as a means of isolating Haiphong without running the grave international risks of bombing or mining the port city itself.

The bomb carries a TNT type warhead and is nicknamed "Destructor." Tons of them, under a plan now in the works, would be dropped on roads to block the transport of cargo from Haiphong and other North Vietnamese ports.

Destructor is one of several new weapons which are changing both the character of the air war and the arguments between military leaders and Defense Secretary Robert S. McNamara on North Vietnamese targets.

The new bomb buttresses the case for two opposing viewpoints within the Administration. It strengthens the case of those who side with the Joint Chiefs of Staff on the feasibility of restricting supplies by bombing the North. But it also can be cited as an argument against those military leaders who favor bombing or mining the port of Haiphong itself.

One Administration official commented: "They can reopen roads but when you make ten cuts instead of just one cut it's a lot harder."

Destructor is a pressure bomb which does not blow up until an object of a specified weight passes over it, or it is jarred into action by vibrations from nearby vehicles. Neither defense industry nor military sources would go beyond this on secrecy grounds.

Such a mine-like bomb, specially designed for roads and trails, is advertised by its backers as tremendously useful at night when the North Vietnamese transport the bulk of their war goods.

Advocates point out that every hour spent in clearing roads and trails of the bombs means that war cargo piles up on the Haiphong docks.

## Is One of Several

Destructor is one of several new weapons changing the old targeting formulas for figuring out gains versus risks.

Among them are precision missiles and bombs which make the bombing of cities safer for the pilot in the sky and the civilians on the ground.

The Navy has developed a whole series of what are called "Eye" bombs—Walleye, Snakeye, Wefeye, Sadeye—for special purpose bombing.

The one which has been discussed the most in connection with North Vietnam is Walleye. It is a bomb which the pilot drops while a safe distance away from anti-aircraft defenses.

## Can Be Watched

The pilot can actually watch the bomb's flight on a small TV screen in his cockpit. If the bomb is going off target, he manipulates a lever which sends signals to the bomb so it can move its fins to change course.

A related technical advance is in electronic counter measures, or ECM. These are devices U.S. airplanes now carry over North Vietnam to confuse enemy gunners.

The ECM devices send out signals to make the defender's radar look like a hash of dots. Or they may send out just one signal which makes the plane look like it is in a different place than it really is.

Still other gadgets tell the pilot enemy radar is tracking or that a surface-to-air missile (SAM) has been fired at him.

Gen. John P. McConnell, Air Force Chief of Staff, has credited ECM for declining airplane loss ratios over North Vietnam despite thickening defenses.

## At Time of Dispute

These weapons are coming into use at the time military leaders and Defense Secretary Robert S. McNamara are in sharp dispute about the value of bombing the North.

While McNamara uses numbers of missions and targets approved to argue that the difference between him and military leaders is small, there are areas of fundamental disagreement.

At issue are the pace and extent of the bombing as well as specific fixed targets like Haiphong.

Admiral Ulysses S. G. Sharp, commander of Pacific forces who recommends what North Vietnamese targets should be hit, wanted to do a lot more bombing sooner, according to testimony released by the Senate Preparedness Subcommittee.

## Favors Wider Strikes

He favors hitting whole systems of North Vietnam all at once—such as petroleum, power, transportation and war industry.

Piecemeal approval of targets does not put enough pressure on North Vietnam's leaders, Sharp argues. They have time to recoup rather than decide the war is not worth the price.

McNamara's rebuttal is that military leaders did get their

share in blasting North Vietnamese petroleum and power. Yet the destruction of these facilities did not move Hanoi toward the conference table or noticeably diminish the prosecution of the war.

The same kinds of arguments engulf the Mig air base issue. McNamara does not feel the Migs are enough of a threat any more to risk losing planes attacking them on the ground, especially since the U.S. has such a favorable record in downing them in dogfights.

But the generals dispute McNamara's gain versus-risk calculation on at least four Mig fields they want to bomb.

The new technology of the air war over the North—Destructor, precision bombs, electronic jammers—is already complicating decision making for both McNamara and the generals.

Targets portrayed as off-limits a year ago suddenly are bombed, partly because these new devices have reduced risks. This adds to the public confusion about who is really running the air war and why.